

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Emotional Intelligence For Employees

As an employee, one of the most important things to recognize is that your feelings, and those of your co-workers, can be very influential and powerful and that your collective current emotional state can alter your perspectives on issues or even cause you to jump to conclusions prematurely. Emotional intelligence can help employees to better understand their own emotions and organizational expectations for appropriate emotional expression so appropriately expressed emotions can be better utilized for personal and organizational progress. For example, emotional intelligence skills can benefit employees by making them better able to read their supervisor's emotions so that that can choose the best approach to use when interacting with them.

As you begin to try and utilize emotional intelligence it is a good idea to review how emotions tend to motivate us:

- Fear tends to motivate people to act now to avoid negative consequences
- Anger may motivate people to fight against wrong and injustice
- Sadness may motivate a person to request help or support
- Disgust may signal that you cannot accept something because it offends you on some level
- Interest may motivate people to be enthusiasm about exploration and learning
- Surprise often makes people pay attention to the unexpected which may be important
- Acceptance tends to enhance friendship bonds
- Joy tends to motivate people to repeat the event that caused the gratification

It is vitally important that you pay attention to the emotions of colleagues. If a mood can set you up to react negatively to something it very well may do the same thing to others at your workplace. Try to be observant of others. Also pay attention to the day of the week and time of day. It is not a good idea to approach your superior about anything during times you know they are extremely busy, or at the end of any workday, especially Friday afternoon, while they are tying up lose ends trying to get out of the office. If you know your supervisor is under extra stress for personal reasons and is being short with you the best course is to ignore their tone unless it becomes a recurrent issue. Then make an appointment at a time of day that is usually less stressful for your supervisor and tell them that you are concerned that they do not seem to be happy with your performance of late and ask what you might do to change that. Chances are they do not realize they have been short with you and the matter can be quickly ameliorated. If this is not the case, human resources may be able to help. While some people might look at these steps as "sucking up" to the boss, they actually have more to do with your own self-preservation.

Disputes between colleagues can make the workplace a very unpleasant place for everyone and where emotional intelligence can serve you well. This being the case, it is best for employees to remember that people they work with are not relatives or social friends and confidants. You are all employees of the company. Over time relationships frequently develop and it is tempting to confide personal problems and information to your "friends." This is not always wise because you never know what might slip out or come back to haunt you at an inappropriate time. Employees that keep the office grapevine replete with suspense may enjoy the attention they receive, but over time they are only hurting themselves. If you have serious problems the resource to utilize is not a fellow employee's ear, but rather the services of the human resource department and their trained professionals. These professionals will keep your problems private and offer advice that might alleviate your distress.

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If you find yourself embroiled in conflict with a fellow employee, keep careful records of the problem behavior and turn to your supervisor or other company resource for help with resolving the problem if necessary. It is very easy to get involved in controversy, but much harder to deal with the issues that may result. Pick your battles carefully. You don't have to let personal disagreements or personality clashes derail your career, but you also don't have to lie down and take everything that is dished out. Make a habit of keeping accurate, dated notes to document your issues. Also make it a habit to go through the proper channels to handle disputes and complaints.

Office dating is another area of conflict where emotional intelligence is important. While these romances may sometimes flourish, they can also become difficult for a business if things do not work out. Think through what you might need to do if the relationship fails before you jeopardize your career. On the other hand, it may be that the relationship is more important than the job. It is always proper to try and be discreet and not let an office romance interfere with the business at hand. In short, pay attention to your emotions and feelings and observe and think about those of others. Then use the information you learn to make good choices about whatever situation comes your way.